

Kentucky Teacher

December 2007-January 2008

News for the Nation's Most Innovative Educators

www.education.ky.gov



Meet the 2008 Teacher of the Year

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Kentucky Teacher

News for the Nation's Most Innovative Educators

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Front cover: Chandra Emerson, Kentucky's 2008 Teacher of the Year, is all smiles as she encourages students during an outdoor activity on a mild November day at Oldham County Middle School. Read about Emerson, Tammy Spratt, Elementary School Teacher of the Year, and Ed Farrar, High School Teacher of the Year, on Page 4.

A new look for Kentucky Teacher

Recent postal increases have forced changes to *Kentucky Teacher*. The new, smaller format will dramatically reduce postage for each issue and provide substantial savings for the nine issues produced each school year.

The new format offers readers more pages – 16 instead of 12. The front-page photo spotlights one of our feature articles. News and feature stories continue to fill the issue. Bulletin Board and Leadership Letter pages have changed locations, but they still will be included in every issue.

This issue also includes the work of three new *Kentucky Teacher* staff members. Writers Susan Riddell and Matthew Tungate come to this publication with strong journalistic skills honed in community and daily newspapers. Photojournalist Amy Wallot's photographs have appeared in daily newspapers in Kentucky and Alabama.

Let the *Kentucky Teacher* staff know what you think about the new format by writing to kyteacher@education.ky.gov.

Department of Education provides new, intensive help for districts

By Matthew Tungate

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All students – regardless of race, gender, economic background, culture or disability – can learn. That belief is the foundation of the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act and Kentucky education reform. But several experienced educators charged with helping districts improve student performance say it can be difficult getting some adults to believe.

Louise Byrd, one of the Kentucky Department of Education's District Achievement Gap Coordinators (DAGC), said the biggest obstacle to overcoming gaps in education is "negative adult mindsets." That's one of many barriers to learning the newly appointed DAGCs will use their experience and training to knock down.

In July, the department merged the District Support Facilitators and Achievement Gap Coordinators into the new DAGC positions to help districts in Tier 3 status under NCLB move forward. Byrd and 11 other educators with classroom or school administration experience are the newly named DAGCs assigned to help build and sustain leadership capacity in those districts.

Thirteen districts are in first-year Tier 3 consequences. There are 36 districts in second-year Tier 3 consequences. Each DAGC is assigned to work directly with two or more districts in Tier 3 consequences.

"If you build leadership capacity, obviously that makes your school stronger," said DAGC Carol Christian, a former middle school principal. "Leadership isn't just about principals, it's about the site-based council, teacher-leadership teams, committees, departments, department heads, etc."

The DAGCs also are assisting schools within the districts in implementing strategies that will close achievement gaps between student groups and raise achievement for all students.

"When students and their families are blamed as the reason for not meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), it overlooks the important role good teaching plays in the learning process," Byrd said. "Solving the problems requires educators to look within the system. Research proves that all children can learn. How much research is it going to take for adults to believe and understand that it doesn't matter where you're from, how poor you are or the color of your skin – all children can learn if you, the adult, truly believes it can happen?"

Jerry Meade, another DAGC, agrees. "This nation is filled with people who came from very humble backgrounds, and because

someone believed in them and gave them an opportunity, they've gone on to become very successful adults. Kids basically want to learn. We've got to give them that opportunity."

The DAGCs will use results from district audits to guide their work. The department's Division of Scholastic Assistance conducts district audits for all Tier 3 districts. The audits use the Standards and Indicators for School Improvement to review and analyze all aspects of a district's operations, said Pat Trotter, who works closely with the DAGCs as staff assistant in the department's Office of Leadership and School Improvement.

Using the findings from the audits, the DAGCs will help the districts rewrite their Comprehensive School Improvement Plans and follow up by monitoring the implementation of the plans. If plans are not being implemented, the DAGCs will help the districts find out why and re-evaluate.

Scholastic audits and reviews show that leadership and culture dictate success. "Leadership has consistently been one of the areas that affects whether or not a school or district improves or meets Adequate Yearly Progress," Trotter said. "With all the issues we have in education, it really comes down to leadership."

DAGCs assist districts in identifying and utilizing school-level leaders to build professional learning communities and develop

dynamic learning opportunities that meet the needs of all children. "Teachers have insights and responsibilities that put them in positions to be leaders," said Byrd, a former Highly Skilled Educator. "They are all CEOs of their classroom. The principal is not the only leader in that building."

It is important that districts understand how to overcome obstacles that stand in the way of raising student achievement. According to Byrd, aligning a school's curriculum with state standards is often seen as an obstacle, so the DAGCs work with districts to help them develop a viable curriculum and show them how to align their work to the appropriate standards.

"We've assisted our districts in that area, so that the classroom teacher can have a guideline as well as a map to go with that curriculum to make sure students are learning what they need to know," Byrd said.

MORE INFO...

<http://education.ky.gov/KDE/Instructional+Resources/Closing+the+Gap>

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Photo By Amy Wallot

Trained to substitute

Judy Clark, a Barren County substitute teacher, helps 7th-grader Megan Kinslow with a mathematics problem while Makayla Gentry works on a nearby computer. Clark and the district's other substitute teachers have completed a program that provides two days of training in strategies, activities and resources for being effective substitute teachers. They also spend one day shadowing a classroom teacher to learn instructional and classroom management techniques. Substitutes are paid for the three-day training.

COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

By Kevin Noland, Deputy Commissioner of Education

New commissioner of education faces busy 2008

In this issue of *Kentucky Teacher*, you'll find information about the Kentucky Board of Education's action in November to name the state's fourth commissioner of education. Jon Draud was selected from four finalists to head the Kentucky Department of Education and lead the state's 174 public school districts in the journey to proficiency and beyond.

Because the press deadline for *Kentucky Teacher* and the timing of Commissioner Draud's arrival in the department did not coincide, I'm writing the commissioner's column for this issue. Commissioner Draud will begin his column on this page with the February 2008 issue.

The commissioner is taking the reins of the department at an exciting time. The 2008 General Assembly convenes in January for a 60-day session during which legislators will consider the state budget for the coming two years. There also is a lot of work ahead to accomplish the state board's goals for public education.

Commissioner Draud will be leading the department and school districts as they work to meet the board's four goals:

- ensuring high academic performance by having all students achieving at high levels, especially in reading and mathematics, so they graduate prepared for postsecondary education and/or work
- providing high-quality teaching and administration by supporting lifelong learning and building leadership skills while providing an equitable place for educators to work and students to learn
- establishing a strong and supportive environment for each school and every child by creating safe, healthy and caring school environments that support high achievement for every student and encourage family and community involvement in children's learning
- increasing the number of high-performing schools and districts through intensive, long-term intervention and resources to schools and districts in need of assistance so that districts and schools at every level are on schedule to meet 2014 goals for the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System and No Child Left Behind Act of 2001

For the past nine years, Commissioner Draud has served part of Kenton County as a state representative. He has been vice chairman of the House Education Committee since becoming a legislator.

Before being elected to the legislature, he was a public school teacher, principal, a

Kenton County school board member, an assistant superintendent for an Ohio public school district and superintendent of Ludlow Independent Schools for 19 years. He also served as an associate professor at Northern Kentucky University.



Noland

His legislative expertise and knowledge of public education are expected to serve Kentucky's public schools and districts well.

As commissioner, he will be carrying the state board's 2009-10 biennial budget request for public schools to the General Assembly. He will be working with the board and the department's legislative

services staff to provide information that supports the budget request in general and the board's top 10 budget priorities specifically.

On behalf of the state board, the commissioner will ask the legislature:

- to increase SEEK (Support Education Excellence in Kentucky) guaranteed base funding to provide a 3 percent unrestricted increase per pupil
- to provide funding for mandated assessments (ACT/WorkKeys, end-of-course mathematics) and expand Kentucky's assessment program to support student achievement

- to fund a phased-in approach to full-day kindergarten and provide preschool programs for all students at 200 percent of the poverty level
- to provide more funding and to increase staffing for additional intervention and assistance to low-performing schools through Scholastic Audits, Voluntary Partnership Assistance Teams, School Assistance Teams and Network Assistance Teams
- to increase funding to better serve our gifted and talented students
- to fund rigorous curriculum and additional services to students in alternative education programs
- to provide training, forums and instructional materials for a new parent-involvement initiative
- to increase funding to the SEEK School Facilities Support Program to provide better learning environments for students
- to increase funding to SEEK for transportation of P-12 students living more than one mile from school
- to expand funding for secondary education reform to increase middle and high school students' success

You can follow the progress of the education budget request and other education bills

during the 2008 session of the Kentucky General Assembly on the Legislative Research Commission's Web site at www.lrc.ky.gov. The site provides links to contact information for legislators by phone (toll free) and e-mail in the "Quick Links" box on the right side of the page.

Celebration of progress

During the past 13 months, Kentucky educators have continued to work hard at getting all students to proficiency and prepared for success. We can look in almost any direction to find ways public education in Kentucky is getting better, whether we're comparing ourselves to past performance or to public schools throughout the country.

More Kentucky students are staying in school and graduating. Our schools are offering more Advanced Placement courses and more rigorous content that challenge student learning. The online Individual Learning Plan is helping middle and high school students focus their coursework toward the careers they will pursue as adults.

As students respond to the rigor and relevance of their coursework, scores for all grade levels and subject areas are moving steadily toward proficiency on the 2007 Kentucky Core Content Test. More than 75 percent of our schools made Adequate Yearly Progress under the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).

We've also seen our 4th graders and 8th graders begin to perform above the national average in science and reading on the National Assessment of Educational Progress.

New grade-level assessments, end-of-course mathematics exams and the EXPLORE, PLAN and ACT series of readiness exams are now in place to further increase educators' abilities to follow individual student progress and provide opportunities for earlier intervention for those students who need help.

Nationally, we are making gains. The Kentucky Long-Term Policy Research Center took 11 major national rankings widely accepted as important measures of student achievement and combined them into a single index. Kentucky moved from 43rd place in 1992 to 34th place in 2005. Most of the states we shared the bottom rankings with in 1992 had moved only a couple of spots by 2005.

As we begin this chapter in Kentucky education under new leadership, we must continue to be focused on our goal to provide a world-class education to every Kentucky child.

(To comment on this column, contact Deputy Commissioner Noland at kevin.noland@education.ky.gov.)



Photo by Amy Wallot

Gaining classroom experience

Ann Lile, a senior education major at the Madisonville Regional Campus of Murray State University, shares a high-five with primary student Matthew Holmes after he correctly answered a question about the book they were reading during the Hopkins County Reading Roundup. For three years, senior elementary education and special education students at the regional campus have been getting practical, hands-on experience in planning and designing individualized reading instruction for primary students by conducting a four-day reading clinic during the district's fall break. The clinic helps the future teachers fulfill a 20-hour reading practicum requirement for their degrees.

Teachers of the Year love teaching!

By Matthew Tungate

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Wearing hoop earrings, an Oldham County football T-shirt and spandex shorts, Chandra Emerson marches in place and says, "We'll wait until the beat comes in." She counts "one, two, three and change, right, left, right, change," reminiscent of her days in the marching band at the University of Kentucky.

Every other day during the semester, she leads students in step aerobics as part of Oldham County Middle School's Wellness class. "You all are awesome. Wooooo!" she encourages.

But it is her action in the classroom, not the rec room, that earned the 16-year teaching veteran the honor of 2008 Kentucky Teacher of the Year. Tammy Spratt, a 5th-grade social studies and language arts teacher at Shepherdsville Elementary (Bullitt County), received the 2008 Elementary School Teacher of the Year. Ed Farrar, a biology teacher at South Oldham High School, was named High School Teacher of the Year.

A calling for all

Emerson believes she has a gift for teaching. It is the family business – her mother and grandparents were teachers, and her grandfather was principal at Liberty Elementary, also in Oldham County.

"There was never a time that I didn't think about teaching," she said. "I was either going to be a band director or an English teacher."

Emerson can relate to her students, maybe more so than most teachers in the school, because she is a native Oldham Countian. "I went to this middle school," she said. "I used to teach 7th-grade language arts in the room I took 7th-grade language arts."

Spratt has a similar experience. "It's kind of appropriate that I got my calling when I was 10 years old in 5th grade, and now I teach 5th grade," she said.

Spratt's parents were tobacco farmers in Franklin County, and neither had the opportunity to finish high school. "But I remember my mother saying, 'I want more than anything for you all to get a good education,'" she said. "So my parents instilled the value of an education at a very early age."

When Spratt was 10 years old, a teacher gave her a construction-paper ribbon for locating and correctly spelling all the state capitals. "I still have that ribbon," she said.

"I have always wanted to make a difference in my community, and I thought one of the most significant ways I could accomplish this goal was to be a teacher," Spratt said. "I've always enjoyed being with kids. ... I think it was truly a calling in my life."

Farrar found his calling for teaching in college, despite his father, older sisters and grandmother being teachers. While he didn't have an "aversion" to teaching, his plan was to be a marine biologist. Farrar's wife and one of his professors suggested he get his teaching certification, and he found he loved it.

A love for teaching

Thirty-six years later, he said, "The same individual that stepped before a classroom 30-plus years ago is still walking into the classroom. I still love what I do."

Kentucky's 2008 Teacher of the Year feels the same way. A National Board Certified Teacher, Emerson has numerous accolades to her credit. She has earned several leadership positions and given many presentations to fellow educators. But what she really loves is teaching children – so much so that she has

no plan to take the sabbatical that comes with winning the award.

"I just can't imagine not being with the kids," she said. "I love to teach."

Farrar shares his love of marine biology with students. He has taken students on 18 field trips to the Florida Keys, two to Australia and one to China to study marine biology. He calls them "face mask-on experiences."

Teachers are constantly telling students that classroom material is relevant, he said. Trips are a way of providing "experiential education. They get to see, 'Hey, it's fun to know something,'" Farrar said.

One former student is a marine archaeologist in England and another is studying marine life off the coast of South Africa, he said. "I don't know if I inspired them, but I certainly gave them the opportunity," Farrar said.

He hopes his colleagues will be unafraid to take students on extended field trips and get out of the classroom. "I would love to see



Photos by Amy Wallot

Kentucky 2008 Teacher of the Year Chandra Emerson helps 8th-grade student Destiney Cook during language arts class at Oldham County Middle School.

more experiential education, instead of less," Farrar said.

Lifelong learners

Teachers are so intent on scoring well on state tests that they're afraid to take time away from the classroom, he said, "when it's time away from the classroom that gives a kid the reason to learn."

Spratt also encourages teachers to seek knowledge wherever possible. Educators have gifts and talents and experiences, she said. When they go into another teacher's room, they should take an idea and make it their own. "Really seek your colleagues," she said.

Teachers also should attend all the seminars and professional development they can, Spratt said. "I hate leaving my classroom, but if I can bring back some really fresh ideas to my students, then I'm really going to impact them," she said.

Emerson, for her part, said she would remind other teachers that all students can learn, and educators are responsible for proving it. "Even though we don't make a lot of money, even though we're not respected the way we should be, and even though we work long hours, I feel like it's our responsi-

bility to kids and to parents and to our community, that we deliver results," she said.

As Teacher of the Year, Emerson feels she represents Kentucky teachers. Winning the award doesn't mean she is the state's best teacher, she said. Even during the awards ceremony in October, she said she was blown away by how good the other finalists are.

"I'm glad that I get to be the voice (for all Kentucky teachers)," she said. "I think I have things to say and that I will represent the teachers well, but so could so many other teachers. I'm representing them. Any one of them could have been the Teacher of the Year, and so could many who didn't apply."

MORE INFO ...

www.ashland.com/commitments/toy_bios.asp

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Spratt



Farrar

Caudill is chosen 2007 Milken Educator

By Susan Riddell

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When Dodd Caudill was 7 years old, he wasn't sure what he wanted to be when he grew up. He did know, however, he loved the rock band KISS.

So it's no surprise that some of his personal teaching philosophies come from the rock band known for its face paint and outlandish concert antics.

"They said, 'Give people more than blue jeans and guitars,'" Caudill said of the KISS band members. "I constantly try to teach new things, and I try to make education important to the kids. I want them to want more. I want them to look forward to walking into my classroom each day."

Caudill himself got more than blue jeans and guitars recently when he was named the lone 2007 Kentucky recipient of the Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award.

The largest teacher recognition program in the U.S., the Milken Family Foundation National Educator Awards were created to reward, retain and attract the highest-quality K-12 educators to the profession. Each Milken Educator receives an unrestricted financial award of \$25,000 and an all-expenses-paid trip to Los Angeles to participate in the annual Milken National Education Conference in May 2008.

Caudill is the state's 48th recipient of the Milken Award since Kentucky joined the program in 1993.

"I'm speechless," Caudill said after hearing the surprise announcement during an assembly of students and fellow educators at LaRue County Middle School. "This is what I do. If you like what you do, awards will come."

Caudill, who teaches 6th-grade mathematics and reading at LaRue County Middle, is very deserving of the Milken Award, according to Principal Corey Keith.

"He's incredibly engaging," Keith said of Caudill. "For him, it's 100 percent about the students. He's all about the kids and growing as a professional. He's not satisfied with a good lesson. He always wants to tweak it. He's very open to new ideas."

"He's a whatever-it-takes person," Keith added. "It is rare to have a math teacher as dynamic as he is, and we're blessed to have him."

Videos make learning fun

Ask any student at LaRue County Middle School about Caudill, and it won't take long for his videos to get mentioned.

Five years ago, Caudill, who is in his 15th year of teaching at the school, began creating videos to excite students about mathematics. In the videos, he transforms celebrities and

TV/movie characters into mathematics experts and promoters. John Madden becomes John Mathen. Ali G is now Ali Gebra and G.I. Joe is Geo Joe. He transformed Gollum, from "Lord of the Rings," into Lord of the Decimals.

Caudill makes the short programs by using video footage or photos. He mimics the person's voice while talking about the appropriate mathematics subject, even if that means rapping like 50 Cent.

"He's a really super teacher," Jason Willman, a 6th grader, said. "He gets kids to be interactive, and he challenges us, and his videos are awesome."

Caudill easily explains his thoughts behind the process. "I try to connect characters with learning," he said. "All kids remember characters, and kids love videos. It's something that excites them. You never know what key will open the door for a particular student."

"In a sense, I'm tricking them into learning. I get them hooked, and then I hit them with content," he added.

Caudill's students recently worked with a Transformers movie unit called Transformations, complete with robots Reflecticon, Translaticon, Rotaticon and Dilaticon. They also will participate in a Road to the Math Final Four this school year.

"He makes learning fun," 6th grader Trent McDowell said. "School can be boring, but his videos are cool. Sometimes he has us work in groups. We're doing things that would be harder if we weren't in groups, so we're really learning a lot."

Groups are a team effort

Every year after Caudill gets to know his students in each class, he divides them into groups of four and hosts the Team Ticket Challenge. Students earn tickets for good behavior and grades, but they also lose tickets when Caudill feels they are not perform-



Photo by Amy Wallot

Dodd Caudill, Kentucky's 48th Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award winner, talks with students and staff at LaRue County Middle School after receiving the \$25,000 award. Caudill teaches 6th-grade mathematics and reading at the school.

ing up to their best.

Periodically, Caudill will collect each group's tickets. The team with the most tickets gets a prize, such as a party in class.

While he points out group work is nothing new to teaching, it's the added element of competition that helps the students strive harder. "Competition breeds the best if it's healthy and fun," Caudill said. "I want them to feel good about winning and not to settle for something like making a D or F in class."

The group-teaching style pays off for

Caudill, too.

"This way, instead of having 24 kids in class, I now have six kids, so to speak, in the form of a group. I can spend more time – one-on-one time – with each group like it's a student, and in the long run, it really pays off."

Giving students more

Caudill's wife, Robin, is a mathematics assistant at North Hardin High School (Hardin County). His brother also is in education.

The Milken award winner decided he wanted to become a teacher while in college. He began school as an accounting major, but decided he didn't want to crunch numbers in a cubicle all day long with no one to talk to.

"Numbers don't talk back to you," he said. "I've never looked back since I made the choice to teach."

What Caudill does look to, however, is his passion for KISS and the group's take on music. "The KISS philosophy is, 'Don't settle for this. Give the audience more.' That's what sold me. And, when I started teaching that was always in the back of my mind."

"I always felt if I came in and taught information in a dry, bland way, I was doing something bands other than KISS were doing," Caudill said. "It's a catalyst. Give people more. Give the taxpayers more. They pay me. It's my job to give them more and perform for them. I perform 180 days a year, and my job is to give kids more. I'm at a great school with wonderful teachers and students. There's nothing I'd rather be doing."

MORE INFO ...

Caudill's mathematics videos are on the district's Web site at www.larue.k12.ky.us/lcis/dodd.caudill/caudill.htm. After accessing the page, click on "Hot Shot Friends."

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Board selects former educator, legislator as commissioner

By Matthew Tungate

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Kentucky's new commissioner of education is a former teacher, principal, superintendent and school board member who comes highly recommended by many education officials. Jon Draud attended his first Kentucky Board of Education meeting as Kentucky's fourth commissioner of education Dec. 6-7.

The board announced in late November that it had selected Draud, 69, to fill Kentucky's top school post. Draud's four-year contract includes a \$220,000 annual salary, plus housing and relocation expenses. The Kentucky Board of Education ratified Draud's contract at its meeting Dec. 6.

"I applied for the position of commissioner because I am confident that I can provide the leadership necessary to accomplish the education goals of our commonwealth," Draud said. "I feel very well prepared for this position. Kentucky's education stakeholders have offered tremendous support, and I feel a sense of urgency to rekindle the spirit of the reform movement of 1990 so that our schools can reach proficiency. Cooperation and collaboration will be the keys to our success."

Draud, a former state legislator representing part of Kenton County, was vice chairman of the House Education Committee from 1999 to 2007. He served as director of School/University Partnerships

at Northern Kentucky University from 1999 to 2007.

Draud has served as an associate professor at NKU (1999-2007); superintendent of the Ludlow Independent school district (1978-97); assistant superintendent of Lockland (Ohio) Public Schools (1977-78); a member of the Kenton County Board of Education (1977-78); and a school principal and teacher (1960-77).

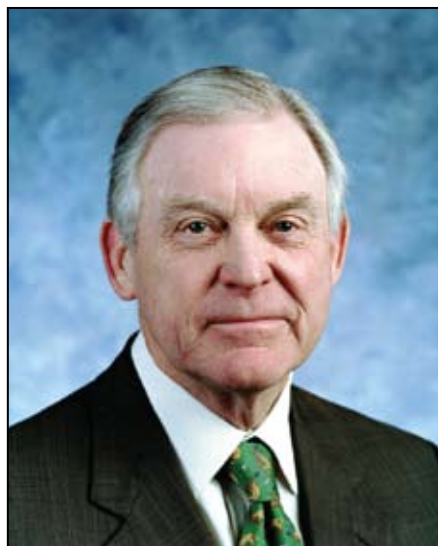
He earned a bachelor's degree in physical education and a master's degree in school administration from Eastern Kentucky University in 1960 and 1963, respectively. He received his master's degree in political science and history from Xavier University in 1973 and a doctorate of education in school administration from the University of Cincinnati in 1977.

"The board is very pleased with the selection of Jon Draud as commissioner," Chairman Joe Brothers said. "The breadth and depth of his experience are evidence of his strong commitment to education, and he has received the support of our education partners, legislators and citizenry."

The process to select a commissioner of education began when the board identified the desired characteristics of a successful candidate. A nationwide search was conducted to recruit candidates, and the board

strongly encouraged Kentucky candidates to apply.

The board solicited and received input about the candidates from stakeholder groups, the general public and references. More than 50 applications were received, with



Draud

approximately half from Kentuckians. The board narrowed the applicants to a list of semi-finalists, then selected four finalists for interviews.

Draud, who listed former Commissioner Gene Wilhoit as one of his references, received recommendations from the presidents of the University of Kentucky, University of Louisville, Northern Kentucky University and the Kentucky

Community and Technical College System; the executive directors of the Education Professional Standards Board, Kentucky Association of School Administrators and Kentucky School Boards Association; and several others associated with education, politics and business.

"I know of no one in the state more prepared through education and experience to lead Kentucky toward the goal of student academic proficiency than Dr. Jon Draud," said Phillip Rogers, executive director of the Education Professional Standards Board.

Mary Ann Blankenship, executive director of the Kentucky Education Association, said in an e-mail to the Department of Education that while the organization did not know all of the applicants for the position and could not make a recommendation, "As a member of the Kentucky House of Representatives, Rep. Draud has been an exceptional advocate for the needs of students and public schools. He has drawn on his vast experience as an educator and education leader to help his fellow representatives make good decisions."

During the December board meeting, Commissioner Draud said he would like to institute a commissioner's citation to recognize exemplary work of public school educators.

The state board also:

- heard changes to the percentages of components used in the 2008-09 elementary and middle school academic indices, including adding a national norm-referenced test in 3rd grade for elementary schools and an index created from EXPLORE in 8th grade for middle schools.
- received an update on adolescent literacy. The board has identified literacy in grades 6-12 as a top priority and will discuss policies and practices at its February meeting.
- allowed Apollo High School (Davies County) to use a mix of Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses to award Commonwealth Diplomas. The Commonwealth Diploma is a special recognition for students who complete a specific set of AP or IB classes.
- approved letting the state Depart-

ment of Education staff develop an energy-technology engineering career track program for middle and high school students, as directed by a recently passed state law. Local school districts will compete for \$300,000 in funds for the initiative.

- approved revised accounting procedures for school activity funds, including forbidding activity funds from starting or ending a fiscal year with a deficit; requiring that local school boards approve all student fees and charges and activity fund budgets; and adopting new requirements for school banks and charitable gaming licenses for raffles.
- heard proposed changes to the SEEK (Support Education Excellence in Kentucky) funding formula to incorporate technology advances for data collection, added calculations to allow for enrollment growth greater than 4 percent and created a way for high-growth districts to get additional funding.
- heard proposals that the Kentucky High School Athletic Association adjust football and basketball calendars beginning in 2009-10 so football starts the week of the last Friday of August and basketball does not start before the football playoff semifinals and that require students who play varsity athletics for one high school before 9th grade to sit out one year if they enroll in a different high school. Another proposal would change how students who are ruled ineligible can appeal that decision. The committee decided not to pass a proposal to require athletes in Kentucky schools to reside in Kentucky.
- awarded Ben Cundiff, owner/operator of Cundiff Farms in Cadiz, the 8th annual Joseph W. Kelly Award. (See photo on Page 13.)

The next state board meeting is Feb. 6-7, 2008, in Frankfort.

MORE INFO ...

www.education.ky.gov – Click on "KDE QuickLinks" in the left-hand menu and select "State Board of Education."

Reducing language barriers



Photo by Maureen Keithley

Dayna Visse, left, a teacher at LaGrange Elementary (Oldham County), and Amy Cook, a teacher at Myers Middle School (Jefferson County), share scenarios that use listening, speaking, reading and writing to teach ecosystems to English language learners (ELLs) during a session of the 2007 ELL Academy at the Ohio Valley Educational Cooperative in Shelbyville. For four Saturdays (August through December), 180 educators, representing 17 districts and 28 instructional teams, met at four locations around the state to learn more about increasing academic achievement of English language learners. Applications for the 2008-09 ELL Academy will be available on the Kentucky Department of Education Web site this spring.

Highlands' culture of success leads to naming as a Blue Ribbon School

By Susan Riddell

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Fort Thomas Independent Schools Superintendent John Williamson knows Highlands High School has a statewide reputation as a "sports school" thanks to state championship football, cross country and soccer programs.

He also knows better.

"At Highlands, the kids in the band are as popular as the ones that play football," Williamson said. "Here, it's cool to be smart and to excel. There's a perception out in the state that we're an athletic school. But we don't recruit athletes; we recruit teachers. Highlands is still a place to come first and foremost for a quality education."

Highlands can back up Williamson's statement.

The public high school of 818 students was recently named a No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Blue Ribbon School. The award recognizes schools that help students achieve at high levels and that make significant progress in closing achievement gaps.

The program rewards schools that score in the top 10 percent statewide in reading and mathematics on state assessments. Blue Ribbon Schools also must make Adequate Yearly Progress under the requirements of the federal NCLB Act.

Highlands has strong ties with the Fort Thomas community. It's the joint effort from those commu-

nity members, faculty and students that drives the school.

"There's just a culture of success here that comes from everyone involved," Williamson said.

Growing AP program

Highlands' selection as a Blue Ribbon School was helped by continuing changes in curriculum, particularly in its Advanced Placement (AP) and reading programs.

"We've looked at our Advanced Placement program and completely expanded that so now there are 16 different offerings. When I first came here, there were probably eight. So we've doubled in eight years the number of courses we offer," Williamson said. "Our enrollment (in AP classes) has increased about 30 percent over that eight years. The pass rate has gone up. You would think as the number of students increases the pass rate would go down."

Last year, 174 students sat for 321 AP tests in 19 different areas. Of those, 21 percent scored a 5, 29 percent scored a 4 and 26 percent scored a 3. Students must score 3 or higher to receive college credit for the AP courses.

"I have been able to take more in-depth classes in areas that interest me," said Highlands senior Hannah Agard, who is taking six AP classes this year. "Taking so many AP courses will also benefit me in college."

"The coursework at Highlands is much more demanding than other schools," Agard added. "Our grading scale makes it extremely hard to get an A, much more so than in other schools."

In classes except for mathematics, a

score of 95 is needed to earn an A at Highlands.

Growing reading skills

Male reading scores have generally been on the rise, but males at Highlands scored higher than 100 in reading on the Kentucky Core Content Test for the first time during the 2005-06 school year. In comparison, female readers have scored more than 100 every year since 2001, with the exception of a 99.01 earned in 2003.

"We tried to incorporate more nonfiction reading materials, which seemed to be more factual and more interesting to boys," Williamson said. "We tried to find and identify more 'boy books,' if you want to call them that, and incorporate them into our English Department. The third thing, which may be somewhat controversial, is that we balanced our English Department staff so it's half men and half women. In the past, it wasn't that way. We recruited more male English faculty to where it's now 50-50. That's very atypical for an English Department."

Highlands Principal Elgin Emmons said literacy is valued at every level in the school district. "Our (reading) successes are a result of an outstanding feeder school system consisting of three small elementary schools and one middle school," he added.

Highlands also has added an exploratory program for seniors to study a problem in their career interest. They go out in the community and work with mentors as part of their senior project.

Growing campus programs

The school is undergoing changes physically, too. New media and performing arts centers are in the works. State-of-the-art science classrooms also will be added, along with general classroom and building improvements.

"They've completely renovated the old high school building," Wil-

This is the first profile in a series about the five Kentucky Blue Ribbon Schools. The February issue of *Kentucky Teacher* will feature Farmington Elementary (Graves County), followed by profiles in later issues on Greathouse/Shryock Traditional Elementary (Jefferson County) and Sorgho and Whitesville elementary schools (Daviess County).



Photos by Amy Wallot

Senior Will Coleman works on a problem during his AP Physics class at Highlands High School. Highlands was named a Blue Ribbon School.

liamson said. "The new building will have a wellness center, a theatre studio, more classrooms, state-of-the-art athletic facilities and that sort of thing. We're putting a mass media center in for television production, journalism and filmmaking. We're trying to make the courses we teach real-life."

"We're putting things in there that are really going to increase the curriculum that we're offering," added Maggie Mueller, community relations coordinator for Fort Thomas Independent Schools. "We're trying to take things to another level. We're not going to say, 'Oh, we're a Blue Ribbon School, we're going to rest on our laurels.' We're looking for ways to get better. We're a well-rounded school. We've got a great performing arts center, great academics, great athletics, and great band, theatre and choir programs. Our choir has sung internationally. Basically, you can get it all here."

The Blue Ribbon School distinction isn't Highlands' only recent honor. The school also has been named a national High Schools That Work (HSTW) Pacesetter School, based on the success of local school

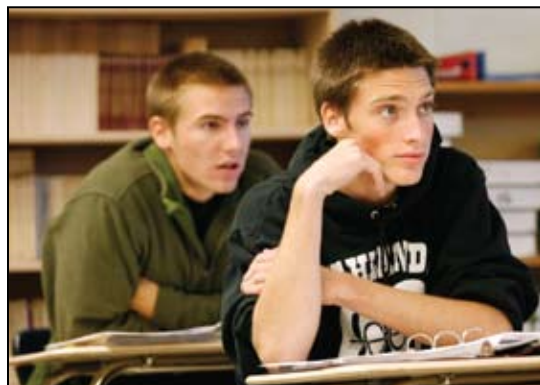
leaders and teachers in improving school practices and raising student achievement.

"Selection as a High Schools That Work Pacesetter School demonstrates that we are providing students with a strong experience in career and technical education, as well as the critical core subjects of math and science," Principal Emmons said. "Whatever our graduates choose to pursue after high school, we are preparing them to excel."

"As a Blue Ribbon high school, we look forward to giving our students more individualized learning opportunities through mentoring programs and internships," Emmons added. "We are planning on developing a mass communications/performing arts program and pre-engineering program that will rival any in the nation. Our primary focus instructionally is on developing critical and creative thinkers, students who can connect easily and readily with the real world beyond high school."

MORE INFO ...

www.forthomas.kyschools.us



Aaron Schklar, left, and Griffin Austin, listen to instructor Ben Lusk during AP literature class at Highlands High School. The school has intentionally focused on increasing reading skills among male students by adding more reading selections to the curriculum that interest boys and by recruiting more male English faculty members.

Working above goal

Clay County and Monroe County use different strategies to go beyond what's expected

By Matthew Tungate

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When David Murray started at Paces Creek Elementary as principal in 1999, the Clay County school had an academic index near the 40s, was in need of improvement and qualified for assistance from the Kentucky Department of Education. The department provided a Highly Skilled Educator (HSE), and his staff began accepting her input, Murray said.

"The staff just took an excellent attitude about having an HSE," he said. "She pointed us in the right direction and got us aiming at the right target."

Following the 2007 state assessments, the school has an adjusted academic index of 109.2, about 34 points higher than its improvement goal.

In fact, Clay County and Monroe County are the only districts with multiple schools that performed 24.9 or more points above their projected improvement goals on the 2007 Kentucky Core Content Test. (See chart on this page.)

What's more, all three of Monroe's elementary schools and five of Clay

County's seven elementaries performed 19 points or more over goal. The academic indices of these over-goal schools are near 100 or higher.

In Clay County

When Murray became Paces Creek principal, he said the area's socio-economics level may have given him excuses for not succeeding. Clay County consistently has one of the state's highest unemployment rates, and drug dealing and drug use are prevalent, he said.

That has led to a high transient population within the county. "It's not uncommon for a child in Clay County to be in two or three elementary schools in the same year," he said.

"I was kind of saying, 'My kids can only do so well,'" Murray said.

As part of trying to get the school out of the state assistance program, he took every staff member – down to the janitorial staff – to Roundstone Elementary (Rockcastle County), which was a top-performing school with demographics similar to Paces Creek. Murray said the 40- or 50-year-old building, "was so clean it shone. That was kind of

a starting point. That just shot my excuse down."

Because of the transience in students, Paces Creek and other elementaries in the district aligned their curriculums, Murray said. Each school teaches the same subjects at the same time of the school year so that students don't miss instruction when they move from school to school in the district.

The school also took advantage of as many grants as it could get, Murray said. That provided money for staff to do interventions with children who fell behind and for hiring additional positions, including Shannon Philpot as reading coach. Philpot said the grants not only funded positions but provided money to train teachers for specific programs such as research-based reading and research-based mathematics.

"When you've taught the same way for years and things just sort of decline, and you get this new research-based thing that makes sense and teaches you how to teach, the teachers just have soaked it up," she said.

Paces Creek had 60 percent novice performers in 2000, but in 2006 had 3 percent novices, Murray said. Philpot said the HSE identified novice reduction as a main key to improvement. She said it was "shocking" to have so many novice performers. Teachers began focusing on moving the lowest students to apprentice and apprentice performers to proficient by the next year.

"It was probably one of the most stressful things I've ever gone through to have somebody tell you exactly everything you've done wrong and to what degree you've done it wrong," she said.

However, as scores improved, the school climate improved. Teachers began taking pride in what they were doing, Murray said. "From a principal's point of view, it's almost like turning a corner when you get the teachers taking pride in what they're doing," he said.

At Oneida Elementary, the other Clay County school making a sizable gain (26.2 points) over its improvement goal, Principal Mike Hensley takes a different approach. He suggests schools need not depend so much on outside ideas.

"It has to come from inside," he said. "Every school's different, and what would work for my school might not work for someone else. There's a button to push somewhere; it's just a matter of finding it."

Hensley and his staff certainly know their school inside out. Like seven of his teachers, Hensley grew up in Clay County and attended Oneida Elementary. He was a student when it opened 50 years ago. Now, in his sixth year as principal, he is likely to retire from the school after spending his entire 33-year teaching career there.

Teachers at Oneida first concentrated on writing because that's what data said they needed to do, he said. In primary, they started pooling teachers and team teaching because he wanted exiting primary teachers to know what a distinguished first-year primary portfolio would look like and vice versa. Teachers in the intermediate grades are now using the strategies, Hensley said.

"Team teaching has been around forever, but I'm a believer in it," he said.

Hensley said Clay County schools get a lot of support from district administrators, including walk-throughs to assess whether schools are using the districtwide curriculum map. There also is a districtwide reading coordinator, and discussions are under way for a districtwide mathematics coordinator, he said. While Clay County may have several high-achieving schools, all may be getting there differently, Hensley said.

In Monroe County

Commonality has driven Monroe County schools' success – and uncommon leadership, according to Superintendent George Wilson. Three



Wilma Grubbs, an exiting primary teacher at an Accelerated Math problem to students. She is one of many teachers and staff members who have left the district and returned to the school to work.

Monroe County elementaries posted results on the 2007 state assessments over their improvement goals for the first year of the 2007-08 cycle.

"The reason these three elementaries have been so successful is leadership," he said. "It's empowering teachers. It's cultivating and bringing out the brilliance of our own teachers. We've got wonderful, brilliant, innovative, creative teachers. ... What they've been about is letting them show that brilliance."

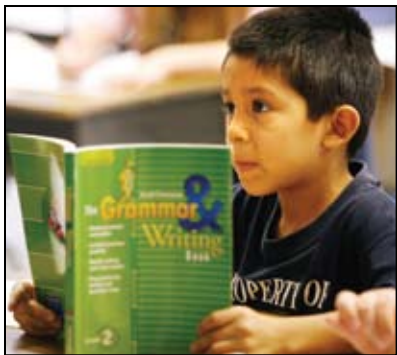
The principals of the three schools – Melissa Biggerstaff at Tompkinsville Elementary (29.4 over goal), Mike Gee at Joe Harrison Carter Elementary (24.9 over goal) and Tommy Gerald at Gamaliel Elementary (19.7 over goal) – all credited Wilson and district administrators with providing resources for the schools.

Gerald said the district has implemented learning checks. Teachers

Above-goal schools for 2007

These schools are listed to show the difference between their adjusted academic indices and the expected performance (improvement goal) on their customized Growth Chart for the first year of the 2007-08 accountability cycle.

District	School	Grade	2007-08 Improvement Goal	Index 2007	Difference
Clay County	Oneida Elementary School	P-06	79.8	106	26.2
Clay County	Paces Creek Elementary School	P-06	75.1	109.2	34.1
Fayette County	Veterans Park Elementary School	P-05	96.5	122.7	26.2
Floyd County	May Valley Elementary School	P-05	81.2	121.4	40.2
Green County	Summersville Elementary School	P-05	81.5	113.5	32
Johnson County	Central Elementary School	P-06	91.8	120.7	28.9
Madison County	White Hall Elementary School	P-05	88.3	114.9	26.6
Magoffin County	Middle Fork Elementary School	P-06	77.5	124.6	47.1
Monroe County	Joe Harrison Carter Elementary School	P-05	81.8	106.7	24.9
Monroe County	Tompkinsville Elementary School	P-05	84.3	113.7	29.4
Pike County	Kimper Elementary School	P-08	82.9	111.8	28.9
Russell County	Jamestown Elementary School	P-06	84.4	114.8	30.4



Photos by Amy Wallot

at Oneida Elementary (Clay County), explains
erred Brown and Danielle Davidson. Grubbs
s who were educated at Oneida Elementary



Emily McCreary explains rounding numbers to her third-year primary students at Tompkinsville Elementary (Monroe County). Irving Pillado, above left, keeps his textbook open for ready reference during McCreary's class.

meet continuously to develop and use these Kentucky Core Content Test-like assessments four times per year. The results guide instruction. "Those results mean everything to us," he said.

Gee said teachers across the district have a common curriculum taught at the same time, though perhaps taught differently. That common curriculum is planned down to the week, he said.

The learning checks are scored by the classroom teacher who gives them, he said, so teachers can immediately ascertain the level of learning of each child. Remediation interventions are provided to each child as needed to address any deficit areas.

Biggerstaff said district administrators support monthly curriculum, instruction and assessment meetings. They conduct walkthroughs to look not only for implementation but

follow-through. They provide monetary support.

Geralds said most of the programs and ideas have come from the top or from something teachers and administrators have learned at conferences. "Things like (conferences) make a difference in student learning," he said.

The principals said they have some key strategies that are helping their schools succeed. Biggerstaff said differentiation in instruction and immediate intervention are important.

Gee said administrators must provide teachers with resources and listen to teachers "because teachers know what to do." Geralds said school culture is the key: a culture of learning, of family and of high expectations.

As proud as Superintendent Wilson is of the Monroe County district's and schools' 2007 test results,

he said they are not the schools' reason for being.

"If it were all about scores, the three of them could declare success and rest on their laurels," Wilson said. "But it's not. It's about our kids being as prepared as they can be for whatever it is they want to do in life. Success is not an end-game, it's a process."

MORE INFO ...

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While student work is displayed on the walls in the hallways at Oneida Elementary (Clay County), art teacher Debbie Hacker puts her own work on exhibit as she paints Miss Frizzle from "The Magic School Bus" on a classroom door.

Ashland Independent Schools get new fitness playgrounds

By Mary Warnock

Ashland Independent Schools

Students at all six elementary schools and Verity Middle School in the Ashland Independent School District have no excuses for not getting fit and staying that way. King's Daughters Medical Center in Ashland donated \$100,000 last spring to sponsor the district's participation in the national health and fitness program, Project Fit America.

The center's donation paid for state-of-the-art, age-appropriate outdoor and indoor fitness equipment – vault bars, parallel bars, step-ups and pole climbs – at all seven schools. Students will use the equipment to increase upper-body, lower-body and abdominal strength, cardiovascular endurance, and flexibility. Students have three levels to reach on the fitness equipment: bronze, silver and gold.

"Today's society is not physically active," said Tony Love, a physical education teacher and coach at Charles Russell Elementary. "This program is designed to help children become more fit, make physical fitness goals and challenge themselves physically."

Families and community members also can use the fitness equipment after school hours.

Teachers are using Project Fit America curriculum materials for student cardiovascular health and lifetime fitness education programs, and teacher-training fitness equipment. The curriculum aligns to national standards and the Kentucky Program of Studies.

"King's Daughters Medical Center and Project Fit America have put Ashland schools on the cutting edge of cardiovascular health and fitness for our young

people," said Superintendent Phil Eason.

Each elementary school will track students for two years through pre- and post-fitness tests administered each fall and spring. "With the Project Fit America program, schools have a permanent tool to put fitness back into play and restore the health of our youth," said Lisa Henson, district director of Student Services.

Other Kentucky schools participating in the Project Fit America program are Fairview Elementary (Fairview Independent), Graves Central Elementary (Graves County) and McNabb Elementary School (Paducah Independent). Local hospitals and community and school organiza-



Photo by Mary Warnock, Ashland Independent Schools

Tony Love, a physical education teacher at Charles Russell Elementary (Ashland Independent), spots students as they cross the horizontal ladder that is part of the school's Project Fit America fitness area.

tions sponsor the program in each school.

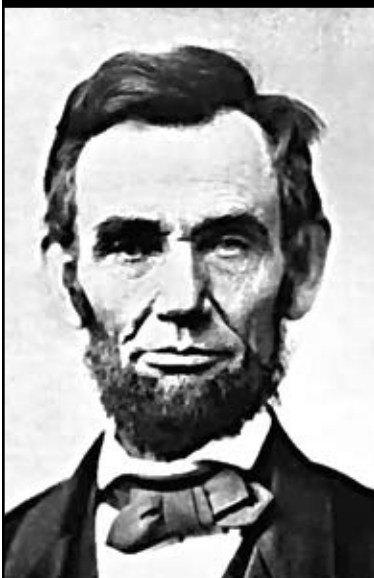
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MORE INFO ...

www.projectfitamerica.org

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Lincoln Bicentennial update



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Three Lincoln plays for school audiences

The Kentucky Repertory Theatre at Horse Cave is staging three productions about Abraham Lincoln to celebrate the life and legacy of America's 16th president. All three plays are official activities of the Kentucky Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission and are being made available to school groups throughout the state.

"One Man's Lincoln" shines the spotlight on Lincoln's Illinois law partner and fellow Kentuckian, William Herndon. Herndon, considered one of the best Lincoln biographers, captivates the audience with stories and anecdotes about Lincoln, his presidency and the people who surrounded him. This production will tour schools, universities and community theaters throughout Kentucky beginning Feb. 13, 2008, for six weeks. It will be presented at the theater in Horse Cave from June to August 2008.

Special school group performances of "Abraham Lincoln," adapted by Robert Block from a play by John Drinkwater, are planned August through October 2008 at the theater. The play will be performed again during 2009, the Lincoln bicentennial year, at the theater.

The Kentucky Repertory Theatre will launch a second touring production in 2009. "With Malice Toward None" highlights Lincoln's speeches, letters and events from his life in the context of the Civil War using music, lights, sound and video. This multimedia production will tour Kentucky Feb. 10-March 22, 2009.

MORE INFO ...

www.kentuckyrep.org

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Middle and high school speech contests

Abraham Lincoln is one of history's great orators. His speeches as a lawyer, senator and president fill volumes and are studied by scholars for their content and composition.

It is fitting that one of the events of the Kentucky Lincoln Bicentennial celebration is a statewide speech contest for middle and high school students in Kentucky public, private, parochial and home schools. The event, sponsored by the Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historic Site, provides students with an opportunity to learn more about Lincoln through independent research and then use their public speaking skills to communicate what they have learned.

Students can select from a variety of topics about Lincoln's life. Speeches must be five to 15 minutes long.

Each participating school can select up to three representatives to the contests that will be held in Hodgenville. Judging for the middle school contest will be Feb. 2, 2008. The high school competition is Feb. 9, 2008. First-, second- and third-place awards will be given in each competition.

Winners of the competitions will receive their prizes during the Kentucky Lincoln Bicentennial celebration at the national historic site in Hodgenville.

MORE INFO ...

www.nps.gov/abli/abraham-lincoln-bicentennial-speaking-contests.htm

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Daviess County educators know first-hand that it's a small world

By Faun S. Fishback

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Generations of American students have grown up hearing the Walt Disney song, "It's a Small World." The lyrics remind everyone that children share this Earth and that, despite differences, they are very much alike.

While Disney makes the concept of a "small world" fun and engaging, the reality of a small world is not. American jobs are moving overseas, and the global competition for jobs has begun to affect American high school and college graduates. American educators are looking for ways to better prepare students for the global society.

The message in Thomas L. Friedman's best-selling book, "The World is Flat," has been an impetus for educators everywhere. Friedman examines the flattening of the global playing field with American jobs being outsourced to China and India. He also delves into what American students need to be able to do to survive the "flat world" in which they are living.

In Daviess County Public Schools, educators already are building global connections for the district's students through a partnership with the Binhu district in Wuxi, China. The partnership is a way for educators – and the local community – to gain a global educational perspective that will help prepare students for tomorrow's living.

"For us to have this unique tie with a school district 8,000 miles away says a lot about the world being flat," said Superintendent Tom Shelton. "I can't put a tangible value on what this is doing for our school district, but I know it will have an impact on the diverse cultures in our community."

The Binhu "sister district," with 67,000 students in 48 schools, is about six times the size of the Daviess County School District. However, elementary school students in both countries are learning

more about one another through pen-pal correspondence. Educators from both countries are flattening the world with exchange visits to each other's schools and the sharing of effective instructional practices face-to-face and via e-mail. People in both countries are learning more about each other, education and culture.

For Sorgho Elementary students Mary, Daniel, Easton and Alec, the partnership means an after-school Culture Club where they can have fun and learn about China. Teacher Deanna Wehrung has visited China twice – once as a tourist and last summer with other Daviess County educators.

The 11 students (exiting primary through 5th grade) in the Culture Club are experiencing some of the lessons Wehrung saw her counterparts teach in the Fengying Primary School in Wuxi last summer. The weekly club meetings are a chance for students to unwind after classes and have fun learning about their peers in a school around the world.

One November afternoon as Chinese music played softly in the background, the Sorgho Elementary students wrote numbers and the alphabet using Chinese characters. They competed with one another in picking up marbles using chopsticks, talked about the miniature clay Terra Cotta Warriors

they created the week before and then headed outside to fly kites Wehrung had bought in China.

Fifty percent of the school's student population participates in the free- and reduced-price meals program, so it's fair to say many students don't get exposed to customs and lifestyles of people very far beyond the borders of Daviess County. However, Wehrung says it's important for students to know "something outside of Daviess County."

The Culture Club helps students understand the Chinese way of life so that, as Wehrung's students tell a visitor, "We can go to China and not starve."

Creating cultural competency is important, said Ray Roth, Sorgho assistant principal. That's why the pen-pal program with classes and individual students is important.

"On a person-to-person level and on the organizational level, the direct contact with Chinese educators has opened doors and gotten everyone excited," Roth added. Despite the time change of 13 hours, the two districts are working out technical differences so that the Chinese students can attend a future Sorgho PTA meeting via the Internet.

Roth is quick to point out his personal stake in the Daviess County-Binhu partnership. During his visit to China as part of the Daviess County education delegation, he noticed the heavy presence of American businesses. He understands how important it will be for area students – and his son – to understand the culture and language of this emerging world economic center.

"I expect my son to go to college," Roth said, "but if he doesn't, I want him to be prepared to get a job in one of the local industries, Kimberly-Clark or Unilever. If they have connections to China, knowing the culture and language will give him definite advantages in his job."

As part of the educational/cultural partnership agreement, both school districts seek to:



Photos by Amy Wallot

Deanna Wehrung, who leads the Sorgho Elementary after-school Culture Club, helps exiting primary student Alec Carlota hang a banner he created by writing his name in Chinese characters.

- build and sustain a friendly partnership by sharing learning
- promote communication between the two school systems
- encourage regular professional exchanges
- design a student exchange program
- cooperate in curriculum building
- help students beyond high school study abroad

In 2006, teachers from the Binhu district visited Owensboro to learn more about curriculum – especially special education, preschool and extracurricular activities. They also met with the Daviess County School Board.

Last summer, Daviess County educators spent a week in Wuxi. They visited schools, watched classroom instruction and teacher preparation classes, met with educators and toured historic sites.

"Our visit included sessions comparing and contrasting our school system and the Binhu school district," said Vicki Riley, Daviess County professional development coordinator and director of elementary education. "We discussed staffing, scheduling and funding. We also led seminars and provided training for Wuxi school administrators. They were particularly interested in hearing about professional development, special educa-

tion and extracurricular activities for students."

Events from the China trip were shared with other Daviess County teachers. Another group of teachers will head to China next July to teach English literacy skills and American heritage and culture to students there. Plans also are being made to set up an exchange program so teachers and students can live and study in the partner district.

In October, representatives from the Binhu district again visited Owensboro. Beverly Dawson, Sorgho principal, opened her home to a principal from the Binhu district. They hope to develop an e-mail correspondence and exchange information about what their schools are doing, she said.

"This experience has helped us put the significant strengths of our educational system into a global perspective," said Superintendent Shelton, "while also serving as an opportunity to identify areas of potential growth as we strive to reach beyond our county, our state and our nation into unlimited horizons for the future of our children."

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Fourth-grader Jared Payne practices writing his name and numbers in Chinese during the after-school Culture Club at Sorgho Elementary.

Minnis blends variety of practical learning lessons into success

By Susan Riddell

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Sometimes teachers must choose between quality and quantity.

For example, do you try one learning tool, spend a lot of time with it and make it great or do you use several instructional ideas hoping each reaches students in their own way?

Dennis Minnis is one teacher who has answered that question by going after both quality and quantity.

"I always have something going on for the students," said Minnis. "Sometimes things work and sometimes they don't, but that's rarely the case. We've had success in a variety of ways."

Minnis, the physical education

teacher at Maryville Elementary (Bullitt County), must be onto something. Practical living test scores for 4th graders at Maryville were solid, as 49.12 percent of students reached Distinguished on the 2007 Kentucky Core Content Test, and another 43.86 percent received Proficient marks. There were no Novices and only three Apprentices on the 4th-grade core content-area test.

The school's overall practical living index was 115.8 – the highest mark Maryville received in any content area.

"My kids worked hard, and we have a top-notch staff. I hope we can keep the scores high each year," Minnis said. "This makes me excited and nervous at the same time. I take it personally how my kids do on the

CATS test in practical living. I want all schools to meet their goals, and I especially want the school I teach at to be the best it can be."

Now in his fourth year at Maryville, Minnis also gets high marks for his approach to health and fitness.

"Mr. Minnis loves what he teaches," said Principal Sam Cowan. "The kids love him, and there is so much momentum for learning. It is just priceless. (His) core content is taught so creatively."

Minnis works out of a small gym, which is typical in elementary schools. His desk and some shelves reside in the back of a storage closet, but the walls are covered with past lessons on the digestive system and a map of the United States showing the route the students used to "run" from capital to capital. In the corner of both his office and the gym sit decorative cereal boxes made by 4th graders.

Evan Price's box of "Patriot Pebbles" claims to be high in fiber with no sugar added.

"A lot of students don't know how to read food labels correctly," Minnis said. "Our 4th graders created their own nutrition facts to learn more about food labels. Student-designed projects are a great way to help teach core content."

The cereal box project is just one of many Minnis uses to incorporate daily practical living into physical education.

Field days with western, Olympic or outer space themes are an annual tradition. He also incorporates other popular programs such as the NFL Punt, Pass and Kick, Jump Rope for Heart and Presidential Physical Fitness testing in his classes. The school also celebrates Kentucky Kids Day by allowing each class to play outside for 30 minutes in rented air jumpers.

Maryville students also have participated in these initiatives:

- The school took sodas, candy bars and other high-sugar foods out of the building and replaced them with bottled water and low-fat, healthy alternatives.
- The Walk/Jog Club has students tracking laps and converting the distance into miles. Geography is



Dennis Minnis, Maryville Elementary (Bullitt County) physical education teacher, explains a new game to early primary students in his physical education class.

incorporated, too. Last year, students ran all through Kentucky. This year, they are running around the world.

- The Be Fit Program has Bullitt County school students, faculty and parents logging minutes they exercise. Maryville students logged the most minutes in 2004.
- The Active Lifestyle Awards Program involves a goal this year to have 35 percent of students exercise one hour a day, five days a week for 12 weeks.
- A dance program for 5th graders has students learning dance and culture. Students learn line, folk and modern dances.

Minnis doesn't stop teaching when the school bell rings. He also serves as the school's cross country coach (both boys' and girls' teams finished among the Top 20 in the state meet this year), encouraging students of all ages to run for the Patriots, the team's name. In the off-season, he coaches the chess team. He has running camps in the summer as well.

"At our running camps, we learn about our respiratory system, muscular system, digestive system and basics to our bodies that relate to running," Minnis said. "At the camps, kids receive learning materials on nutrition, sleep habits, goal setting and injury prevention. I did not really think about connecting our topics to the state standards but much of what we learn is straight up health lessons on nutrients, the food guide pyramid and body systems. When we do stretches, we're not just doing them. We're learning why we're doing them."

Minnis holds after-school tutoring for his students who might be struggling in P.E. or health or for

those who simply want more.

"I have students already making A's attending my after-school tutoring sessions just because they enjoy learning more about health," Minnis said. "We use Health Readers, PowerPoints and health education Web sites. After-school tutoring allows my students to get a lot more done each week."

Minnis believes in the importance of physical education for his students' minds and bodies.

"Physical education is vital to our Kentucky schools in and of itself, regardless of practical living testing," he said. "Good physical education programs are vital to the success on our CATS scores statewide. Schools that are dropping physical education to have practical living classes are making poor decisions just to get their CATS scores up."

"Our kids get one hour of P.E. each week in two 30-minute sessions, and our 4th graders receive one hour of health to top off their two 30-minute classes. This is super helpful to their learning."

While students at Maryville Elementary are excelling in practical living, Minnis also is making sure they are having a good time doing it.

"Mr. Minnis is a great teacher," said Stevone Hayes, a 1st grader at Maryville. "He lets us do healthy stuff, and he teaches us things about the body like how to eat right. He has a great class, and he makes it fun, too."

MORE INFO ...

dennis.minnis@bullitt.kyschools.us
ww2.bullittschools.org/mes



Photos by Amy Wallot

Dennis Minnis, physical education teacher, points out the target to early primary student Diamond Fraley to help her focus on throwing a bean bag in a hockey-style game at Maryville Elementary (Bullitt County).

LEADERSHIP LETTER

Compiled by Susan Riddell, susan.riddell@education.ky.gov

Tips for dealing with staph infection

A handful of cases of the Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA) staph infection have been reported in Kentucky schools the past few months, prompting a lot of questions and concerns from parents across the state.

While schools and health departments have spent countless hours raising awareness about the spread of the staph infection and how to control it, there's a lot principals and administrators can do as well to ease the minds of students, parents and community members alike.

The National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA) has compiled the following recommendations and additional information to assist in responding to community concerns and media inquiries related to MRSA:

- Communicate proactively to your school community to assure people that school officials are aware of the issue, whether or not you have any cases of MRSA. Send letters home with students to provide parents with information about the school district's response. Post information and links on the school Web site to provide resources to your communities. Use available voice mail messaging systems and e-mail alert lists to notify parents about letters being sent home and/or about how schools are addressing the issue.
- Target communication efforts to key internal staff and be sure to include appropriate staff in planning responses. Provide resources for athletic directors on your internal or external Web site. Provide staff and athletic directors with staph/MRSA facts and provide them with the steps needed to prevent/contain outbreaks. Develop a joint training (with your health/safety officer, health specialist and local health department's communicable disease division) for custodial and maintenance staff to discuss how to ensure preventive cleaning measures and to raise their awareness of the problem and their role in prevention.
- Prepare for media calls by developing key talking points in advance. Share those talking points with other staff to ensure that your system speaks with one clear voice about the MRSA issue.
- Coordinate messages with other community agencies, particularly your local health department, to raise awareness of this community issue that also is affecting schools. Meet with your county health department

contacts and school health coordinator or specialist to develop a joint communication plan to address MRSA.

For more about MRSA and how to prevent the spread of it and other skin infections, go to the Kentucky Department of Education Web site at <http://education.ky.gov/JumpTo?jump=skininfections>. For a look at other school health services, go to <http://education.ky.gov/JumpTo?jump=healthservices>.

Kentucky Afterschool Network receives funding

Kentucky children and youth will benefit from more high-quality after-school programs because of a three-year grant to Kentucky Child Now from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation.

With this \$450,000 grant (including matching funds), Kentucky joins 32 other statewide after-school networks that have received Mott funding since 2002. Under the leadership of Kentucky Child Now, the Kentucky Afterschool Network will strive to:

- create a sustainable structure of statewide, regional and local partnerships, particularly school-community partnerships focused on supporting policy development at all levels
- support the development and growth of statewide policies that will secure the resources that are needed to sustain new and existing after-school programs
- support statewide systems to ensure high-quality programs

"The Mott Foundation's support will jump-start and sustain successful after-school programs in Kentucky," said Carol Blethen, executive director of Kentucky Child Now. "It will provide the structure and mechanism to bring together key decision-makers on after-school programs in the state to ensure that each and every one of our youth experience the fundamental resources they need to succeed in life: caring adults, safe places, a healthy start, marketable skills and opportunities to serve."

Participants in Kentucky's network will include policymakers, educators, child-care providers, after-school/out-of-school providers, youth development workers, program developers, child advocates, 21st Century Community Learning Centers, Family Resource and Youth Services Centers, community education providers and parents.

Matching funding will come from the Kentucky Department of Education, Ken-

tucky Department of Health and Family Services, Kentucky Commission for Children with Special Health Care Needs and Kentucky Child Now.

What's next in education?

"Edutopia," the magazine of The George Lucas Educational Foundation (GLEF), has announced its annual list of 10 predictions for this school year. The look to the future for ideas to improve education is based on the knowledge of experts and lessons learned over the course of the previous school year.

Among this year's predictions:

- Online learning for students and teachers will grow exponentially.
- Increasing access to digital content will lead to an exponential growth in school-based online communities on the MySpace/YouTube model.
- Merit pay and other new approaches will be seen as the best answer to getting and retaining gifted teachers.

- A Sputnik-like crisis in scientific literacy will lead to revitalization of science teaching.
- Vocational-education academies will energize the American work force.
- The federal No Child Left Behind Act will be accepted, if grudgingly, as a fact of educational life, but will evolve by policy advocate and new congressional leadership.
- U.S. education will adapt school time to match student needs.
- Chinese will be the new French.
- After-school and offsite programs using community expertise will take on the bulk of arts teaching.
- As the presidential campaign gains momentum, civics and politics will be front and center in the classroom.

"Edutopia" provides information and inspiration for innovative teaching in K-12 schools. For more about the magazine or The George Lucas Educational Foundation, go to www.edutopia.org/index.php.



Photo by Amy Wallot

Excellence in education leadership

Joe Kelly, left, former Kentucky Board of Education chair from 1989 to 1998, poses with Cadiz residents Ben Cundiff and his wife Janine after Cundiff was named the 2007 recipient of the Joe Kelly Award at the December state board meeting. The award is given annually by the board to businesspeople who offer outstanding leadership and service toward promoting school improvement and equitable educational opportunities for all Kentucky children. Cundiff, a farmer, former lawyer and banker, has been active in education reform efforts on the state and local levels and is passionate about making education a top priority in Kentucky.

BULLETIN BOARD

Compiled by Susan Riddell, susan.riddell@education.ky.gov

Conferences

"Hats Off to Literacy"

The Kentucky Council of Teachers of English/Language Arts conference is scheduled Feb. 1-2, 2008, in Lexington. The conference theme is "Hats Off to Literacy." Conference information and registration are available online.

<http://conference.kcte.org>

National Reading and Literacy

The 2008 National Reading Recovery and K-6 Classroom Literacy Conference will be held Feb. 9-12, 2008, in Columbus, Ohio. Conference session list, hotel information and registration are available online.

www.readingrecovery.org

School Counselor Association

The Kentucky School Counselor Association (KSCA) annual conference will be held March 5-7, 2008, in Lexington. There will be more than 40 breakout sessions, an awards luncheon for all KSCA members, two keynote speakers and more than 50 exhibitors.

Contact: Mary Ann Wilson, mawsomky@aol.com

www.kyschoolcounselor.org

Kentucky Association for Gifted Education

The 28th Annual Kentucky Association for Gifted Education (KAGE) conference will be Feb. 21-22, 2008, in Lexington. The theme will be "From Artists to Zoologists - Developing Kentucky's Gifted Potential."

www.wku.edu/kage/callforproposals2008.pdf

www.wku.edu/kage

Music, visual arts

The Kentucky Arts Council is hosting a professional development seminar March 7, 2008, in Louisville. "Teaching Art and Music in Core Content through Kentucky Traditions" will allow educators to participate in classroom-ready, hands-on activities that address core content in music and visual art with cross-curricular links to language arts, social studies and science. Online registration is available. Cost is \$60.

Contact: Judy Sizemore, (606) 364-5831, circuit@prtcnet.org

<http://kycraft.ky.gov/market/teacherreg.html>

Positive Youth Development

"Rethinking Youth: Basic Principles of Positive Youth Development" will be hosted by

Kentucky Child Now! for anyone who works with young people. This free four-hour workshop is available on four dates: Jan. 11, 2008, in Jackson; Feb. 25 in Lexington; March 14 in Elizabethtown; and April 4 in Henderson.

www.kychildnow.org

Great Depression curriculum

The Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, Louisville Branch, will present a free workshop covering new Federal Reserve-developed curriculum for teaching the Great Depression on Jan. 17, 2008, from 5-7:30 p.m. (CST) at the Carroll Knicely Conference Center in Bowling Green. Teachers will receive free curriculum; registration is limited.

Contact: David Ballard, (502) 568-9257, david.b.ballard@stls.frb.org

www.stlouisfed.org/education/conferences.html

Events

TEAMS

Students in grades 9-12 are invited to participate in Tests of Engineering Aptitude, Mathematics and Science (TEAMS) Feb. 16, 2008, at the University of Kentucky. Schools may register as many teams of four to eight students for this academic program and competition as they wish. Registration closes Jan. 15, 2008.

www.jets.org/teams

Online PD research project

e-Learning Kentucky is looking for 60 or more 4th-, 5th-, 7th- and 8th-grade English/language arts and mathematics teachers to participate in a national research study evaluating the effectiveness of online professional development courses. Participants can earn a \$300 stipend and PD or graduate credit for taking three online courses from spring 2008 through spring 2009. Additional information and registration are available online.

E-mail questions to elarningkyinquiry@education.ky.gov or contact Bob Fortney toll-free at (866) 432-0008, ext. 4540, bob.fortney@education.ky.gov.

www.bc.edu/efe

Amgen Award for Science Teaching Excellence

Amgen is now accepting applications for the 17th annual Amgen Award for Science Teaching Excellence (AASTE). The award honors K-12 science teachers who impact students through exemplary science teaching and who have demonstrated results in student learning in communities where Amgen operates. Winners receive a \$5,000 unrestricted cash award and a restricted \$5,000 cash grant to the recipient's school for the expansion or

enhancement of a school science program, science resources or the professional development of the school's science teachers.

Applicants must submit innovative lesson plans they have successfully incorporated into their classroom and will share with other teachers.

Applications must be postmarked by Jan. 31, 2008. Winners will be notified in May.

www.amgen.com/citizenship/aaste.html

Recruiting online PD facilitators, course designers

e-Learning Kentucky is recruiting participants for online professional development course facilitation and course design training that begins in late January 2008. Training stipends will be paid for 11 weeks of online training. Interested candidates can request an application or more information by e-mailing elarningkyinquiry@education.ky.gov.

Albert Einstein fellowship

Applications are being accepted for the 2008-09 Albert Einstein Distinguished Educator Fellowship. The program seeks teachers who have strong backgrounds of teaching success coupled with strong interest in education policy. Fellows will spend a school year living and working in Washington, D.C. The application deadline is Jan. 13, 2008.

www.scied.science.doe.gov/scied/Einstein/about.htm

NASA 50th Anniversary Essay Competition

The NASA 50th Anniversary Essay Competition for middle and junior high school students is accepting entries. The competition consists of two separate topics, each with a limit of 500 words. Students are asked to describe how they benefit in their everyday lives from space technologies built by NASA over the last 50 years. The second topic requires students to imagine how their lives will be changed by NASA's space technology in the next 50 years. Entries are due Jan. 7, 2008.

www.nasa.gov/audience/foreducators/5-8/features/F_Essay_Competition.html

Best Practices award applications

Schools can apply for the Ernest L. Boyer 2008 Best Practices Character Education in the Elementary School Award. Up to three awards of \$10,000 will be made to elementary schools (pre K-5/6). Materials must be postmarked no later than Jan. 15, 2008.

Contact: Terri J. Hopkins, (717) 796-5077, thopkins@messiah.edu

www.boyercenter.org/



Photo by Amy Wallot

Greathouse/Shryock Traditional Elementary School (Jefferson County)

BULLETIN BOARD (Continued)**School Safety and Bullying PSA contest**

The Reel School is sponsoring a statewide video contest. The partner for this year's contest is the Kentucky Council for School Safety (KCSS). The topic is school safety and bullying. Entrants must submit a 60-second public service announcement for KCSS to use at a later date. The contest is open to any school class, club or organization in Kentucky. Winners will be named in elementary, middle and high school divisions. The deadline to enter is Feb. 1, 2008.

Contact: Jeffrey Jones, jeffrey.jones@fayette.kyschools.us

www.emck.net/reelschool/students.html

Kentucky Youth Storyteller Project

Students in public, private and homeschools can compete as individuals or tandem teams (two to four members) in the Kentucky Youth Storyteller Project during February 2008. Kentucky's representatives to the National Youth Storytelling Showcase will be selected from winners at school, regional semifinal and state competitions. Contest applications and resources that connect storytelling to curriculum are available on the Kentucky Storytelling Association's Web site.

www.kystory.org – Click on "Programs and Activities," then "Youth Storytelling."

Preservation photo-essay competition for students

Celebrate Preservation Month in May 2008 by having students participate in the Kentucky Heritage Council and Preservation Kentucky Inc. photo-essay competition. The 2008 theme is Restore-Reuse-Recycle. Students select an older building in the community, photograph it and write an essay on how it can be restored, reused or recycled. Students are required to share their work with at least one local decision-maker in addition to competition judges. Entries will be judged at three levels: primary (grades 1-5), intermediate (grades 6-8) and secondary (grades 9-12). Deadline is May 15, 2008.

www.preservationkentucky.org/photoessay.asp

Resources**Free Tuskegee Airmen presentation for schools**

For a limited time, schools can receive one free presentation about the Tuskegee Airmen. The 60- to 90-minute assembly for up to 400 students is on a first-come, first-served basis. There are many Kentucky connections to the country's first African-American mili-

tary pilots and ground support personnel who served in World War II and the men and women who made history in black aviation. Travel expenses for the presenter are the only charges.

Contact: Ron Spriggs, (859) 576-3636, ronspriggs@aol.com

<http://members.aol.com/rstaexhibit>

TIP grant application online

The Teacher Initiated Program (TIP) grant has moved to a new deadline and an online application system, Kentucky Arts Services OnLine. The Kentucky Arts Council's TIP grant enables teachers to bring professional teaching artists into their classrooms for hands-on experiences in making art, whatever the discipline. Step-by-step instructions are provided to complete and submit the application online no later than Jan. 15, 2008.

Contact: John S. Benjamin, director of Arts Education Programs, toll free at (888) 833-2787, ext. 483, john.benjamin@ky.gov

<http://artistdirectory.ky.gov/aer/educationalarts/default.htm>

Tree seedling sale

Looking for new tree species for your school campus, an outdoor classroom or your home? The Kentucky Division of Forestry is offering a variety of native hardwood and conifer species – including nut-and fruit-bearing trees – for sale through April 2008 in bundles of 10 trees and 100 trees.

www.forestry.ky.gov/seedling

Literacy Without Limits

Produced in partnership with KDE's Early Literacy Branch, this DVD-ROM resource showcases strategies that content area teachers can use to help students who struggle with literacy. It features 90-plus video clips from Kentucky classrooms. This resource is for grades 4-12 teachers in multiple subjects and classroom settings. DVD-ROMs are posted online.

www.literacywithoutlimits.org

Google for teachers

Search-engine giant Google Inc. offers a variety of online interactive tools, curriculum resources and lesson plans for teachers. The company also invites teachers to add their lesson plans to the site. The new site, "Google for Educators," features a tutorial for teachers on conducting better Web searches.

Other tools include:

Google Earth — three-dimensional mapping software based on satellite imagery

SketchUp — a 3-D software program that lets students design buildings and explore geometric concepts

Google Book Search — finds books that match students' search terms

blog and photo-sharing software

word-processing applications — allow students to work simultaneously on the same document from different computers

www.google.com/educators/index.html

My Wonderful World

National Geographic is offering an interactive Web site for parents, teachers and students packed with a wide variety of resources for students to learn about the world. The Web site, called My Wonderful World, also has free education materials available.

www.mywonderfulworld.org/index.html

Thoreau play available

In conjunction with Walden Earth Day 2008, an educational performance play about the final two days Henry David Thoreau spent in his cabin before leaving Walden Pond is now available free of charge. This play is designed for use by high schools, home schoolers and community leaders in conjunction with April 22 Earth Day events. The play script, posters, director and actor notes, plus customized lesson plans are all available online.

www.waldenplay.com

Social studies teachers needed for unit

The Kentucky Teacher Network for Civic Education and Engagement is recruiting high school social studies teachers to implement a unit on Forms and Powers of Government, Origins and Branches of the U.S. Government and Federalism during the 2007-08 school year.

Contact: Tim Holman, tim.holman@louisville.edu

<http://louisville.edu/education/civics>



Photo by Amy Wallot

Moss Middle School (Warren County)

Changed your address? Let us know

If you don't want to miss an issue of *Kentucky Teacher*, please take a few moments to learn how to let us know when your address changes.

Kentucky Teacher receives mailing addresses for all active Kentucky certified classroom teachers and administrators from the Kentucky Teachers' Retirement System. If you are a certified employee of a Kentucky public school, you can change your mailing information in one of two ways:

- Complete a change of address form that can be downloaded from the retirement system's Web site at http://ktrs.ky.gov/01_active_members/B_change_name.htm.
- Submit a written request that includes your name, old address, new address, Social Security number and your signature.

Mail the form or your written request to:
Kentucky Teachers' Retirement System
ATTN: Tammy Brown
479 Versailles Rd.
Frankfort, KY 40601

If you are not a current teacher or administrator, e-mail your change of address to kyteacher@education.ky.gov or by mail to:

Kentucky Teacher
612 Capital Plaza Tower
500 Mero St.
Frankfort, KY 40601

District-university partnership works to improve minority recruitment

By Matthew Tungate

matthew.tungate@education.ky.gov

The Warren County School District and Western Kentucky University have formed a partnership that is at the forefront of trying to help school districts recruit and retain minority teachers, according to a Kentucky Department of Education official who works with diversity and teacher recruitment.

Working with college campuses to reach minority teacher candidates is the "most accessible and easiest way to attain them before they venture out and leave, to kind of have first dibs on those that are graduating," said Natasha Murray, the department's Educator Quality and Diversity Program consultant, Kentucky Education Placement Service coordinator and education recruitment specialist.

Nationally, districts are struggling to diversify the teaching work force, Murray said. In Kentucky, the minority student population is about 15 percent while minority teachers make up only about 4 percent of all public school teachers, she said. The department's Educator Quality and Diversity Division was established to help districts increase the percentage of minority educators working in the state and help retain them.

"We live in a diverse society, so for students to be able to have that interaction early on in a classroom or in a school building, I think that will make them better citizens and able to function in our diverse society with both understanding and respect for others," Murray said.

While several districts have hired

minority recruiters, Warren County's collaboration with the university is unique, she said.

The Warren County School District is collaborating with the university offices of Minority Teacher Recruitment and Diversity Programs to form the Creating A Diverse Education Team (CADET) program. The purpose of CADET, established in 2002, is to create a more diverse teacher application pool for the Warren County School District.

Students in the CADET program are invited to future-teacher receptions in the fall and spring. At these events, the Warren County superintendent and school administrators "can see who is ready for certification and who is ready for employment." During the receptions, students participate in mock interviews.

"What the students don't know is that at the end of the reception and the mock interviews, those students who answer everything successfully are offered jobs," she said.

Michael Coleman, Warren County's teacher recruiter, said there have been five receptions. The school system has hired three minority teachers as a result of the events.

Coleman's recruitment efforts begin well before a reception when he meets with the director of Western's Minority Teacher Recruitment Program, Coleman said. Coleman is able to identify and encourage local students to do their student teaching in the Warren County School District, and he helps make sure they complete their application process. In some cases, he contacts principals to let them know about candidates.

"My goal is to find the best and brightest minority students to present to the superintendent and principals," he said.

Coleman said his major concentration is working with Western's Minority Teacher Recruitment Program. He also travels to teacher career fairs and works with the Bowling Green community aggressively recruiting minority candidates. He works with Western's deans, and sometimes he

gets referrals.

Taiwana Bradford, an 8th-grade language arts teacher at Moss Middle School, is one example of a successful referral. Her husband's job transferred them from Paducah. She looked at jobs at Western and contacted people there.

Coleman got her name from a Western acquaintance, contacted Bradford, got her application process going and put her in touch with the district's personnel office. Then, he took her information to the Moss Middle School principal, who ultimately interviewed and hired her.

"When Mr. Coleman contacted me, I was immediately impressed by Warren County's efforts to increase the representation of minorities in its staff," Bradford said. "Warren County Schools serve a diverse population, and they realize the importance of having a staff that reflects the population that they serve."

Bradford said Coleman also involves minority teachers in recruiting by inviting them to the receptions at the university. This gives them an opportunity to share their experiences with potential applicants. She said he regularly calls, e-mails and visits the teachers he has recruited.

Murray said the Kentucky Department of Education has numerous programs to recruit more teachers. They include Future Educators of America clubs in middle and high schools; the Minority Educator Recruitment and Retention Scholarship program that provides additional money to address the critical shortage of minority teachers in Kentucky; Transition to Teaching that recruits second-career professionals and recent college graduates interested in obtaining teacher certification; and the Kentucky Educator Placement Service (KEPS), a Web-based recruitment system for teacher candidates and education jobs across the state.

To increase diversity among certified staff, Murray said districts should:

- post certified vacancies on the Department of Education Web site; districts are required by law to post for 30 days on KEPS
- advertise on the district Web site
- advertise in the local paper
- attend job fairs



After her husband's job brought them to Warren County, Taiwana Bradford was referred to Michael Coleman, teacher recruiter for the Warren County School District, as a potential teacher candidate by a contact at Western Kentucky University.

- work with surrounding colleges and universities
- post vacancies on national Web sites
- contact Murray to get scholarship recipients' names
- look at the district's incentive packages, see what surrounding states are offering, then offer a sign-on bonus or one-time differential payment

Teachers also can be great recruiters of their students into the teaching profession by being positive about the work they are doing, she said.

"You're in a profession, and what children see and hear from a person

in that profession has a lot to do with their decision to go into that profession," she said. "So if they hear a teacher complaining about the profession all the time, then they're going to think, 'That's not the field I want to go into.'"

MORE INFO ...

www.education.ky.gov – Click on "KDE QuickLinks in the left-hand menu and select "Educator Recruitment and Retention"
michael.coleman@warren.kyschools.us
natasha.murray@education.ky.gov



Photos by Amy Wallot

Taiwana Bradford, an 8th-grade teacher at Moss Middle School (Warren County), discusses an assignment completed by student Hana Nezirovic in her language arts class.